

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A map search system using map data, comprising:

a selecting unit for selecting an item that is used for retrieving an on-map position that is a position on the map data;

an information storing unit for storing a plurality of search information items, wherein a given search information item is related to a given search area of a plurality of search areas and used for retrieving an on-map position that is related to the given search information item within the given search area;

a retrieving unit for retrieving, within a targeted search area of the search areas, an on-map position corresponding to the selected item by collating the selected item with search information items related to the targeted search area;

an area-designating information storing unit for storing a plurality of area-designating information items, wherein an area-designating information item is related to one of the search areas;

a determining unit for determining whether the selected item corresponds to any one of the area-designating information items; and

an area designating unit for designating, when the selected item is determined to correspond to a certain area-designating information item that is related to a certain search area, the certain search area as the targeted search area.

2. The map search system of Claim 1,
wherein the area-designating information storing unit stores the area-designating information items that include words indicating areas included in the respective search areas.

3. The map search system of Claim 1, further comprising:
an address-book storing unit for storing a plurality of address-book information items, each of which at least includes a name indicating a facility that is present in a given position and an address information item of the given position,

wherein the selecting unit selects the item that is a given address-book information item of the address-book information items, and

wherein the determining unit collates the address information item included in the given address-book information item with the area-designating information items.

4. The map search system of Claim 1,
wherein the area designating unit includes a notifying unit for notifying an effect that the area designating unit designates the certain search area as the targeted search area when the area designating unit designates the certain search area as the targeted search area.

5. The map search system of Claim 1,
wherein in a case where the area designating unit

designates the certain search area as the targeted search area by switching from a previous search area into the certain search area, the area designating unit switches back from the certain search area into the previous search area as the targeted search area after completing retrieving within the certain search area.

6. The map search system of Claim 1, further comprising:

a pre-determining unit for determining whether the selected item corresponds to any one of the area-designating information items that are related to the target search area,

wherein, when the pre-determining unit determines that the selected item does not correspond to any one of area-designating information items that are related to the target search area, the determining unit then determines whether the selected item corresponds to any one of the area-designating information items that are related to any one of search areas other than the target search area.

7. A search area designating method used in a map search system that includes:

a selecting unit for selecting an item that is used for retrieving an on-map position that is a position on map data;

an information storing unit for storing a plurality of search information items, wherein a given search information item is related to a given search area of a plurality of search areas and used for retrieving an on-map position that is related

to the given search information item within the given search area; and

an area-designating information storing unit for storing a plurality of area-designating information items, wherein an area-designating information item is related to one of the search areas;

the search area designating method comprising;

a first step of determining whether the selected item corresponds to any one of the area-designating information items;

a second step of designating, when the selected item is determined to correspond to a certain area-designating information item that is related to a certain search area, the certain search area as a targeted search area of the search areas; and

a third step of retrieving, within the targeted search area, an on-map position corresponding to the selected item by collating the selected item with search information items related to the targeted search area.